



City of Boston
Employee Assistance Program
FrontLine Employee
www.cityofboston.gov/EAP

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Your Resource for Solutions

Cholesterol Awareness and Reduction Guide

Nearly 50 million Americans have cholesterol levels that are too high. High cholesterol in the blood is one of the main risk factors for heart disease and stroke—the two leading causes of death. Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. (Too much of it in your blood, however, can lead to buildup on the walls of your arteries and form blockages.) The National Cholesterol Education Program (National Institutes of Health) recommends that adults aged 20 years or older have their cholesterol levels checked every five years. Get their *Guide to Lowering Cholesterol*. You'll discover everything you need to know to safeguard yourself from high cholesterol, including what foods you can eat to lower it. There are many more foods than oatmeal! And did you know that pizza can have more cholesterol than butter?

Source: www.nhlbi.nih.gov [Search "cholesterol tlc"] (PDF link)

Alternative Health: Fact, Fiction, and In Between

Can turmeric treat arthritis? Will eating sage improve memory? Many news stories discuss the health benefits of herbs, spices, teas, and natural oils. Not sure what to believe? Visit the online National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) and discover research claims about complementary and integrative health approaches. You can see whether rigorous scientific investigation is available on your chosen topic. You can also learn how a substance is used, recommendations, cautions, and other information. However, be sure to talk to your medical

Source: nccih.nih.gov/about/ataglance

Diligent Workers: Meeting Project Deadlines

Tons of books exist on overcoming procrastination, and each one discusses project deadlines. Do you see project deadlines as inescapable irritants of life or challenges to be conquered? To become fearless about deadlines, attack each one immediately by dividing it into pieces, chunks, or mini-goals necessary to complete it. Supercharge your motivation for meeting these mini-goals by giving yourself rewards for each one you complete. Any small treat, small positive experience, or bit of fun will do. Acquire this deadline management skill and you will begin rejecting procrastination as a tool for managing the pain of deadlines.

Are You a Morning or Evening Person?

All of us are affected by our sleep-wake cycle and an internal circadian biological clock. When are you most creative—morning or evening? Not sure? The *Ostberg Morningness–Eveningness* questionnaire may help you find out. Although not consistently validated by research, it may yield insights to help you decide when to do creative work, achieve better sleep, exercise, and establish work habits that fit your biological situation. Check out this fun, automated scoring questionnaire at www.cet.org/self-assessment. Choose the circadian rhythm assessment and get a detailed, personalized report at the end.

When You Discover Teen Drug Use

The discovery of a teen's drug use can create overwhelming fear and concern for parents, but there are no boilerplate best-intervention steps. Age, circumstances, the substance used, frequency of use, your child's current school status, and even your family's medical history of risk for dependence on substances can figure into an effective response. There are four key factors to weigh in your response. 1) Avoid the decision to say or do nothing. This includes minimalizing the use (e.g., "thank goodness it was only pot"), because there is risk associated with any kind of substance abuse. 2) Assess the situation. Attempt to discover when the drug was used, how often it was used, who it was used with, how it was acquired, how much your teen possessed, and the circumstances of use. This assessment process will probably lead you to a decision on how to respond. 3) Consider family goals, standards, values, hopes, expectations, and legal implications. Reflect on them to help craft your response. 4) Do not allow the desire to avoid conflict thwart your better judgment to intervene. Winning this inner battle comes with the territory of parenting. 5) Turn to professional counseling or guidance—for yourself—if you are unsure how to respond or believe your intervention was not effective. This step can be a tough one, but may save years, even decades, of anguish.

Be Internal-Customer-Service Savvy

You may be an external-customer-service pro, but are you internal-customer-service savvy? Internal customer service means taking care of those persons or departments in your organization and their needs with high-quality service and assistance. Knowing the key elements of internal customer service will help you so you can deliver the "wow!" factor inside as well as outside your organization. 1) Promptness—think responsiveness, speediness, and moving obstacles to "deliver the goods." 2) Competency—think showing your professionalism, skills, and completeness. 3) Positivity—think optimistic, affirming, polite, and energetic. 4) Exclusivity—show a your-needs-are-my-sole-concern-right-now attitude. Does it sound like good internal customer service is a prescription for burnout? Just the opposite. These mostly attitude- and belief-driven behaviors can help insulate you, because they produce a reciprocal response from others toward you!

Preventing Teen Type 2 Diabetes

The incidence rate of type 2 diabetes is up 33% over the past decade. In the decade before that, it was up 15%. An increase in obesity among teens is represented in this increase. Family history and genetics are still factors in the risk of type 2 diabetes, but experts say the sharp rise in computer games, TV-watching, sedentary behavior, decreased physical education programming, and the fact that fewer children are participating in sports all play a part in the epidemic. The four steps for parents to help children reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes include: 1) Reading about type 2 diabetes. Understand family risk, causes, and symptoms. 2) Gaining an understanding of the health, nutrition, and exercise requirements of children and young teens that can help prevent type 2 diabetes. 3) Helping your children be active each day, and have them start while young to develop the habit of being active. 4) Reinforcing it all by being a good role model.

Learn more at www.ndep.nih.gov [search "pub 154"].

Never Too Late to Start Exercising

Middle-aged men waiting for motivation to start an exercise program have some good news—the exercise does not need to be that vigorous or take that long to do a lot of good. And if you weren't an exercise dynamo in your 20s or 30s, you haven't lost ground in preventing heart disease. The key is to start now. Twenty minutes a day is enough to get solid benefits—a 21% reduced risk of heart failure! Inactivity raises your risk 69% for early heart failure. You don't have to overdo it. The same study also showed that heart-failure risk is higher for those who overexercise—and the negative returns equaled the risk for those who are inactive! Researchers believed the findings would also apply to women.

Source: heartfailure.onlinejacc.org [search: "heart failure risk"]